

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 971

By Finney L

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dixie Carter.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dixie Carter; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Carter was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who distinguished herself in the entertainment industry, bringing great pride to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, known across the United States for her Southern charm and stately beauty, Ms. Carter was a key figure in American entertainment, a field in which she worked for nearly five decades of her seventy years of life; and

WHEREAS, born May 25, 1939, in McLemoresville, Dixie Virginia Carter spent many of her early years in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, she attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and Southwestern at Memphis, which is now Rhodes College; she graduated from Memphis State, which is now the University of Memphis, with a degree in English; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, Ms. Carter made her professional stage debut in a Memphis production of *Carousel* before moving to New York City in 1963 and appeared in a production of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*; and

WHEREAS, she later appeared in Broadway productions of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Master Class*, *Pal Joey*, and *Sextet*; and

WHEREAS, she married businessman Arthur Carter in 1967 and they had two daughters, Mary Dixie Carter and Ginna Carter, both of whom followed in her footsteps as actresses; after the marriage ended, Ms. Carter returned to acting with roles in *One Life to Live* and *The Edge of Night*; and

WHEREAS, she was married to actor George Hearn from 1977-1979; and

WHEREAS, upon moving to Los Angeles, Ms. Carter appeared in recurring roles in several television shows, but it was her role in the acclaimed show *Designing Women* that made her a household name; and

WHEREAS, *Designing Women* ran from 1986-1993, during which Dixie Carter truly flourished in her role as Julia Sugarbaker, whose intelligence, charm, wit, and poise mirrored her own; and

WHEREAS, Julia Sugarbaker, through Ms. Carter's remarkable portrayal, became one of television's most beloved characters; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Carter went on to roles in television shows such as *Family Law* and *Desperate Housewives*, for which her performance was Emmy-nominated; she remained a prolific actor in stage and film productions such as her final film, *That Evening Sun*, which competed for the South by Southwest Narrative Feature Grand Jury Prize; and

WHEREAS, she was also a political activist and author; she published her popular memoir, *Trying to Get to Heaven: Opinions of a Tennessee Talker*, in 1996; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Ms. Carter was awarded such honors as the Distinguished Achievement Award in Creative and Performance Arts from the University of Memphis; in 2005, she became the namesake of the Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center in Huntington, which she and her husband had worked closely with city officials in designing and constructing; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Carter was noted for her portrayals of Southern women and gracious Southern pride; and

WHEREAS, Dixie Carter was deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, along with her daughters, Ms. Carter is survived by her cherished husband, actor Hal Holbrook, whom she married on May 27, 1984; her sister, Melba Helen Heath; and several nephews and nieces; and

WHEREAS, never straying far from her Tennessee roots, Ms. Carter renovated her family home in McLemoresville in recent years, and she and Mr. Holbrook divided their time between McLemoresville and Beverly Hills, California; and

WHEREAS, Dixie Carter leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional entertainer, public servant, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dixie Carter, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character, her many contributions to the arts, and her dedication to excellence throughout her estimable career.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Ms. Carter.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.